

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1           1.       A method comprising:  
2           receiving a call at a gateway of a packetized network;  
3           directing the call for connection to a feature platform via the network;  
4           performing a service related to the call in the feature platform; and  
5           after performing the service, transferring the call to another location in the  
6                    network to provide a connection between the gateway and the other  
7                    location, the connection being independent of the feature platform.
  
- 1           2.       The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the packetized network is a  
2           voice network.
  
- 1           3.       The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising providing an  
2           authentication service as the service in the feature platform.
  
- 1           4.       The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service  
2           validates a calling card number.
  
- 1           5.       The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service  
2           validates a personal identification number.
  
- 1           6.       The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service  
2           includes voice prompts.
  
- 1           7.       The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service  
2           utilizes Automatic Number Identification (ANI) information as a basis for  
3           authentication.
  
- 1           8.       The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising providing a  
2           follow-me service as the service.
  
- 1           9.       The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the other location is an  
2           egress gateway.

1           10.     A communication network comprising:  
2           a packet switched network including one or more gateways coupled to receive  
3           calls for the network requiring a feature service; and  
4           a feature platform coupled to connect to the calls received at the one or more  
5           gateways, provide the feature service and cause the calls to be  
6           redirected to another point on the network after the feature service is  
7           provided.

1           11.     The communication network of claim 10 wherein the feature service is  
2           an authentication service.

1           12.     The communication network as recited in claim 11 wherein the  
2           authentication service includes voice prompting.

1           13.     The communication network as recited in claim 11 wherein the  
2           authentication service utilizes Automatic Number Identification (ANI) information for  
3           authentication purposes.

1           14.     The communication network of claim 10 wherein the feature service is  
2           a follow-me service.

1           15.     The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is  
2           redirected from the feature platform to the other location on the network using a  
3           media gateway control protocol.

1           16.     The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is  
2           routed to the feature platform according to a destination number identification service  
3           (DNIS).

1           17.     The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is  
2           received from a publicly switched telephone network (PSTN).

1           18.     A method of authenticating a call received at a packetized voice  
2           network comprising:

receiving the call requiring authentication at any one of a plurality of ingress points for the network;  
 routing the call from the ingress point to an authentication server;  
 authenticating the call in the authentication server; and  
 routing the call to an egress point on the network instead of the authentication server after authenticating the call.

19. A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, the method comprising:  
 receiving at a gateway to a packet-switched network, an information stream including encoded voice-band traffic originating from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network;  
 directing the information stream over the packet-switched network to an authentication service and thereby establishing a connection between the voice terminal and the authentication service; and  
 upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information stream from the authentication service, re-directing the information stream via the packet-switched network to establish a connection with a target device.

20. The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising:  
 authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service.

21. The method as recited in claim 20,  
 wherein the authenticating includes bi-directional communication of encoded voice-band traffic between the voice terminal and the authentication service via the gateway.

22. The method as recited in claim 19,  
 wherein the directing is based, at least in part, on first destination identifier supplied with the encoded voice-band traffic originating from the voice terminal.

1        23.    The method as recited in claim 22,  
2        wherein a second destination identifier is supplied from the voice terminal  
3                coincident with the authenticating; and  
4        wherein the second destination identifier is selective for the target device.

1        24.    The method as recited in claim 22,  
2        wherein the first destination identifier includes a phone number corresponding  
3                to the authentication service; and  
4        wherein a second destination identifier selective for the target device is  
5                supplied from the voice terminal coincident with the authenticating.

1        25.    A method of operating a packet switched network comprising:  
2        receiving at an authentication service in the network a request to authenticate  
3                an endpoint for a pay-per-stream distribution of media;  
4        upon authentication by the authentication service, directing the pay-per-  
5                stream distribution of media from a feature server in the network  
6                providing the pay-per-stream distribution of media as an information  
7                stream; and  
8        providing via the packet-switched network a connection between the feature  
9                server providing the information stream and the endpoint.

1        26.    The method as recited in claim 25 wherein the authentication request  
2        originates with the endpoint.

1        27.    The method as recited in claim 26 wherein the connection between the  
2        feature server providing the information stream and the endpoint includes an egress  
3        point of the packet switched network.

1        28.    An apparatus comprising:  
2        a packet switched network including one or more egress points coupled to an  
3                external telephone network; and  
4        a feature platform coupled to control outgoing calls for call agents, the  
5                outgoing calls connecting respective destination numbers and

6            respective ones of the call agents through egress points, connections  
7            between the destination numbers and the respective calling agents  
8            being independent of the feature platform after each of the calls is  
9            connected.

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